



News Release

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Media Contact:
Marie Nagata
865-9545 (c) 538-6519 (o)

Baby Your Baby™ is ‘All Grown Up’

Famed UDOH Program for Moms and Babies Turns 20

(Salt Lake City, UT) – From infancy to “adulthood,” the Baby Your Baby™ program has helped thousands of Utah women have healthy babies. When Baby Your Baby (BYB) was born in 1987, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) meant it to be a temporary, two-year prenatal outreach and media campaign. The goal was to educate and encourage all pregnant women to seek early and frequent prenatal care in order to reduce Utah’s infant mortality rate (IMR), which was 8.7 deaths per 1,000 births at the time.

Twenty years later, Baby Your Baby is still thriving. 2005 data show Utah’s IMR is now the lowest in the nation, at 4.5 deaths per 1,000 births. BYB has served more than 100,000 women and answered more than 300,000 phone calls from mothers-to-be.

When the program was launched, the UDOH brought in a ‘who’s who’ list of prestigious partners, including the March of Dimes, the Utah Birth Defects Network, WIC and KUTV, making BYB the first public/private partnership of its kind in Utah. Other partners include the Willard L. Eccles Charitable Foundation, IHC and Smith’s Food and Drug.

“Baby Your Baby is a marvelous example of how government agencies and private companies can work together to make a difference,” said Dr. David N. Sundwall, Executive Director, UDOH. “It is also the most successful and longest-running public health promotion campaign in the state,” he added.

Two of its most important successes have been reductions in the numbers of babies born with brain and spinal deaths and infant mortality due to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

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“Our staff members who answer the hotline and work on our outreach are thrilled every year when we hear that we are losing fewer and fewer babies,” said Marie Nagata, BYB Program Coordinator. “In fact, in just the last 10 years, birth defects of the brain and spine have dropped 50 percent in Utah,” Nagata she said.

In addition to saving lives and preventing birth defects, Baby Your Baby has also produced numerous education materials, including the Health Keepsake book. The Keepsake has been in print for nearly 20 years and is available in English and Spanish. More than 400,000 books have been distributed in Utah since 1990, and more than 200,000 copies have been adapted and sold to other maternal and child programs in 32 states.

The Baby Your Baby program has also received more than 50 local, state and national awards, including the prestigious Healthy Mothers Health Babies National Achievement award for the best Sustained Public Information Program in America.

The mothers who seek help from BYB come from all walks of life. Their one commonality is that all are facing financial hardship. Baby Your Baby provides temporary financial assistance to those mothers, paying for prenatal visits until they can get Medicaid benefits or care through a low-cost clinic.

Baby Your Baby™ is a partnership of the Utah Department of Health, Intermountain Healthcare and 2 News Fresh Air.

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